

Earth First! Action Update

Issue 64 December 1999



"Action is the life of all. If thou dost not act, thou doest nothing." General Winfield Scott

EDI WTO,

Between November 30th and December 3rd Seattle hosted the third ministerial conference of the WTO. It brought together bureaucrats from 135 nations to attempt to further impose the market on our lives and to make major decisions in our 'best interests'. However the WTO's aims are far from this. Since being established in 1995 the WTO has continuously placed profit before people and planet. In response to this and in attempts to build better mechanisms for ensuring social justice and environmental protection actions took place on and around N30 throughout the world...

In Sheffield on Friday 19th November, prior to the WTO meeting, around 12 terrorists gained entry into Cabinet Minister Richard Caborn's Office. The terrorists were armed with anti-WTO leaflets and two were heavily disguised as a postwoman and cow. After using false pretences to gain entry into his office ("Delivery for Mr Caborn") they proceeded to harass the Minister for Trade about his forthcoming visit to the WTO meeting.

In Madhya Pradesh, India, more than 300 indigenous Adivasis jumped over the fence of the World Bank building on 24th November. They blocked the building, covering it with posters, graffiti, and cow shit, sang traditional songs at the gate, and went back only after Mr Lin, the country director of the World Bank, went in to receive a letter signed by all their movements. Attempts by Mr Lin to deliver a speech were refused by the Adivasis who said that such dialogues only had the objective of deceiving the Adivasis while pushing through commercial interests.

On 25th Nov 5000 French farmers held a banquet of local produce under the Eiffel Tower in protest at the impact of trade liberalisation.

The EF! AU is written by activists as a networking tool for activists. A different collective takes on its editorship for a year at a time, in line with EF!'s non-hierarchical principles. If you have done an action, set up a new group, or want to tell people about a campaign, then send us an article (maximum 150 words). It doesn't matter if it seems small to you; stories of 3 people sitting on a digger are sometimes the most inspiring especially to people who aren't part of a large group. The feature pages are also available for longer articles which will provide useful information for activists.

The Monthly Round up of Ecological, and Other, Direct Action from Around Britain

Earth First! is not a cohesive group or campaign, but a convenient banner for people who share similar principles to work under. The general principles behind the name are non-hierarchical organisation and the use of direct action to confront, stop and eventually reverse the forces that are responsible for the destruction of the Earth and its inhabitants

DOIN' IT UP NESTLE

Around 40 people invaded the Nestle factory in Halifax. Some walked through the food factory turning off chocolate machines, other groups invaded offices and others hung banners. The fire alarms went off, the police arrived and the workers all piled out of the factory wondering what was going on. When they learned what the WTO was and why Nestle was targeted, several proved quite sympathetic. Once the main crowd of protesters had left to blockade the gate, the police arrested those left on-site. Three people hung a massive banner from 50 feet up the factory's chimney. In all 15 were arrested, a number for attempted burglary (?)

LEEDS SHEENANIGANS

Over 100 people gathered in Leeds, matched by double that number of police. They walked through the streets with banners and huge model figures, of a rich boss and an enslaved worker. Setting down outside British Telecoms, leaflets were handed which listed the corporate targets in Leeds that supported the WTO. An Eric garage was then blockaded, the rooms in the Hilton hotel leafleted and other antisocial actions taken by small groups.

WTO demo's took place all over the country, in Glasgow, Manchester, Sheffield, Cardiff, Bangor and Edinburgh. There were marches, video-showings and blockades. In Totnes a dished garage and old Toll House were squatted to raise local awareness about the WTO.

Other decentralised protests took place around the world. In Geneva 'vandals' cut the electricity supply to the WTO HQ causing an explosion in the adjacent power supply building and plunging the WTO building into darkness and wiping out computer links to Seattle.

News in Brief

• On October 27th supporters of Mumia Abu-Jamal occupied the FBI Office in Portland USA. They demanded that the FBI release all files pertaining to Mumia Abu-Jamal, the MOVE organization and organisations supporting Mumia, to Mumia's attorney in order to provide necessary material for a new, fair trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal. It is not thought the FBI complied with this demand.

• The Norwich city centre branch of Macmillan's was picketed on 19th Oct; the international day of action against Macmillan. Leaflets and info floggers were handed out and a banner hung. October 30th also saw an impromptu 'party' held at the same location. Around 25 revolutionaries entered the store with costumes, music and leaflets. The staff quickly ejected them all then called the police.

• Police investigating June 16th are dubious after the Crown Prosecution Service dropped charges against a woman demonstrator allegedly found in possession of a look-alike. The CPS ruled that prosecuting the 15 year-old student would be against the public interest because of injuries she suffered when she was hit by a police van at the height of the riot. The woman was charged with violent disorder.

• Two Ashton Court protesters who crawled down into a quarry just in time to stop a meadow being blasted by dynamite have had the charges of aggravated trespass thrown out of court. The judge ruled that as protesters were still underground during the quarry expansion, the prosecution actions were 'excessive' under the rather obscure eighteenth century Explosives and Offences Act.

• On 21st October, a wet Saturday lunch time, people from Swanssea Earth Action and the Peoples Swanssea Campaign took part in a 'Safely Pedestrians Only' event. The idea was to emphasise the problems that those not wishing to use cars face on a daily basis just in getting from A to B. It's bad enough that our city centres are full of traffic fumes without having to risk our lives trying to get them!

• Earth First! South Central is a new Earth First! group formed 'somewhere' in between Bedford, Northampton and Luton Keynes - and doing a on-line at www.mindstar.org/ufd

• To those who heard about how the nasty ALF 'branded' an undercover journalist. His work with the RSPCA was terminated after doubts were raised over the integrity of his video evidence. It is thought he helped set up the cock fight to then 'expose', and doubts over his evidence have led to at least one court case collapsing. On one previous occasion he has claimed he was shot in the leg and on another that he had been flogged and flogged. Things that make you go 'mm'.

• Julia Butterfly Hill has been living 180' high in an ancient redwood called Luna for almost two years. Luna is located adjacent to a massive madingley caused by MAXXAM/Pacific Lumber's logging that damaged or destroyed 30 homes. On Sunday 12th December there will be an anniversary rally in the USA.

• On Saturday 30th October two people were arrested in North Yorkshire on suspicion of criminal damage (less released without charge). The suspicious of the police may have been alerted when they were handed bags full of GM plants marked 'biohazard'.

"WANTED : MASS MURDERERS"

British Aerospace held a careers seminar at Manchester University, where they hoped to attract young people to join the company which makes weapons of mass destruction. BA makes the Hawk fighter jets that were sold to Indonesia and then used for years in repressing the people of East Timor. Four people heard about the careers seminar the previous day, and decided to let the students know what BA is responsible for. Two came to the door holding a banner and leaflets, but were refused entry by security guards. Luckily the other two were already inside, so one woman held the door open while another explained their reasons for being there. BA panicked and shut down the seminar - allowing the four people to discuss BA's practices with attendees.

More of the people present were opposed to the seminar than wanted it, the police failed to turn up, obviously having better things to do, also a video projector cable had mysteriously disappeared.

On 2/11/99 British Aerospace tried to hold a reinforced patriotic recruitment talk at Sheffield University. Some Sheffield EPers thought they found a career in murdering people so they went down to apply. 4 protesters managed to get past the security on the doors and made three speeches on the evils of BA. The BA speakers meanwhile fled. The protesters stayed there for a bit eating free food and borrowing their freepost envelopes (HEHEHE!) Then some protesters held a die-in. A few minutes later BA returned to talk to a few remaining wannabe killers. Protesters burst back into the building but could not get through the locked doors to the room they were in. Still, they probably couldn't have heard much over the cries of "Don't worry, they're only birds" and the banging on the door.

Aberystwyth students seize off the SAS

Despite his training as a former S.A.S. soldier, the threat of criticism was too much for Tim Spicer (Scaredy Spice) chief executive of Sandline International, the private army-responsible for the carnage in Beaufort among other atrocities. Timmy was due to give a lecture at the university of Wales Aberystwyth on "The role of private armies in the emerging global order." When he was informed by the 'u' that he might face opposition he decided to chuck out. Unwilling to speak to anyone who might disagree with his own brutal line, Scaredy spice was disgraced as the commander of 2 British army soldiers who killed an unarmed Catholic teenager in N. Ireland, shooting him in the back. "Bam!" - We Won! and one student. "But, we're sorry to have missed out on the chance to throw rotting vegetables at Timmy."

EXODUS VICTORY

London's Brixton Collective have managed to defeat a last minute attempt to evict them from a farmstead they have occupied since 1992. The eviction notice had been entirely unexpected given that Exodus had successfully pitched for the property in auction in 1998. However, with no legal binding on completion of sale until contracts and deposits had been exchanged, the Department decided to pull out of the deal after extensive lobbying from Tory MP Jonathan Sayeed (Mid Beds). The attempted eviction was subsequently planned for the morning of November 5th and hundreds of activists from around the country prepared for an emergency mobilisation after news of the threat swept round the country.

However, following Exodus's personal appeal to Lord Whitty, Sayeed's campaign to evict the farm faltered just two days before the planned arrival of bailiffs. Sayeed said that he was "furious", but there is now nothing that Sayeed can do to alter Exodus's legal possession of the 17 acre farm.

BRIEF ENCOUNTER

Marks and Spencers were caught with their trousers down at the opening of their new Manchester store by Super-heroes armed with the biggest pair of pants in the city. 'Superheroes Against GM Farts' endured a four-metre pair of pants and then attempted to pull down all the tasteful trolleys on display in the store. The GM cotton disproves M & S's claims to be totally organic. Monsanto's GM cotton is bred to be herbicide and pest resistant. It has all the inherent risks of gene transfer and increased pesticide usage of other GM crops and it does nothing to prevent skinmarks, either. Watch for further actions! More info 0161 2244846

SAFETY DAD GETS CROSS

Dad Derek Potts was famous after his six-year-old daughter was knocked down on a busy road outside his cat. Swanssea Council told him they could only afford to build one new crossing this year and had 50 other requests. So Derek decided to do it himself. Every night he trekked out to paint black and white stripes on the road, complete with battery operated beacons and railings. But as he was finishing, he was arrested and his crossing dismantled. He said: "The playground is just over the road and children are always making their lives to get there." After council workers moved in, all that remained were a few white stripes on the road.

FUNKY MONKEYS

Nov 28th's demo against Shrewsbury Monkey Farm in Shropshire saw activists blocking Brighton town centre while the riot squad waited on a nearby lane 20 miles away. Save The Shrewsbury Monkeys! PO Box 3090, Brighton BN1 3QU tel: 0702 093 6956

MUMIA MUST LIVE!

Please join the International Campaign for Justice by joining the demonstration on 6 November 1999 at Trafalgar Square, London, at 2pm prompt ready to move elsewhere.

"Don't tell me about the valley of the shadow of death I live there" - Mumia Abu Jamal.

Mumia Abu Jamal has been on death row for over fifteen years having been framed for the murder of a police officer. In truth he is under threat of death because of his political beliefs and action. He fearlessly criticised the racism and violence of the Philadelphia police department and is a former Black Panther.

What would you have done if you knew the exact date Martin Luther King was to be gunned down? Well on 2nd of December Mumia Abu Jamal is due to be executed by lethal injection. [STOP PRESS- a stay of execution has been granted, but this does not really change the situation.] His death warrant was signed in October by Governor Thomas Ridge. Mumia's immediate response was: "This is just the next stage of the fight. We will continue to fight. We will win!"

Mumia's attorney Leonard Weinglass recently wrote "For more than 15 years, Mumia has asserted his innocence. The life of a black political activist lies threatened by those same forces who have historically urged a national system of intimidation and control.

"Nothing short of a complete vindication for Mumia will prevent yet another injustice in a history already saturated with the blood of innocents." Please send letters to the Judge and Mumia's attorney. Sample letter opposite.

Judge William H. Yohn Jr.
United States District Court,
2609 United States Courthouse,
601 Market Street,
Philadelphia PA 19106

Please also send a copy to Mumia's attorney:
Judge William H. Yohn Jr
c/o Leonard Weinglass esq.

FAO GOVERNOR TOM RIDGE

ROOM 225

MAIN CAPITOL BUILDING

HARRISBURG

PA17120

USA

Dear Governor,

I am writing to strongly urge you to reconsider the decision to execute Mumia Abu Jamal on the 2nd of December of this year. The death penalty is a violation of the most basic human right, the right to life. Amnesty International and other international human rights organisations have repeatedly called for its abolition.

Even in the case of somebody who is clearly guilty, the effectiveness of the death penalty is in itself questionable. There is no evidence of it having a significant deterrent to violent crime in any country in which it is used. Whilst I have every sympathy for the families of the victims of violent crime, the death penalty is not the solution. Capital punishment does not help the families to recover from their grief. Nor does it deal with the societal factors which led to the occurrence of the crime.

In Mumia Abu Jamal's case there are still more important reasons why the death penalty MUST be commuted. The evidence upon which he was convicted is spurious. Eye witnesses to the murder for which he is charged describe a short stocky man, Mumia is tall and slim. Mumia's support campaign can show that the evidence given by witnesses in court was selective and incomplete. This must be thoroughly investigated.

As an outspoken black campaigner accused of murdering a white policeman, it is inconceivable that issues of racial prejudice will not have had a bearing upon the arrest, trial and sentencing of Mumia Abu-Jamal. There is no place for racism in the judicial system. It is therefore essential that Mumia's death penalty is commuted and that he is released or given a re-trial.

I URGE YOU TO GRANT CLEMENCY FOR MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

For further information see <http://www.callnetuk.com/home/mumia> or contact Mumia Must Live!

FREE WEST PAPUA

October 4th was designated a national day of solidarity with the West Papuan people, who were invaded in 1963 by Indonesia, with direct actions in solidarity happening around the UK. For background information and to get involved, contact CPM Support Group, c/o 43 Gardner Street, Brighton, BN1 1UN. A national action is planned before the 300,000 West Papuans already murdered turn into another East Timorese bloodbath.

Two offices of Rio Tinto Zinc in Bristol were occupied. In the morning 15 people entered the Mining and Exploration office, ejected eventually by the police. Others leafleted and hung a West Papuan flag from a footbridge across the high street. In the afternoon the Admin building was occupied for over two hours. Activists were locked on and barricaded in. There were three arrests. Reception from the general public was good, and people got to talk to the staff about what their company is doing.

Meanwhile in Manchester, British Gas got a visit. They have major offshore gas projects, as well as onshore holdings covering nearly 5,000 square kilometres, together with the Indonesian state oil & gas company. This is all only possible due to the 'stability' Indonesia has brought to the island with its British Aerospace weaponry.

British Gas Trading denied having anything to do with the 'other British Gas'. But they refused to disassociate themselves from the goings-on on the other side of the world.

EE! CONTACTS NOVEMBER '99

EE! CONTACTS

Armen Valley ERI c/o 16 Albert Road Littlehampton West Sussex BN14 8EM 01903 721615 armer@radiofreesussex.co.uk	Nottingham ERI c/o the Rainbow Office 102 Mansfield Road Nottingham NG1 3HW 0115 856 5888	EEF Winter Meet eeffw@radioeef.org	Arachnid Black Corpus (Informer support) c/o PO Box 446 Sheffield S1 1BY	Legal Defence & Monitoring Group 88 Hanover London WC1N 3HX 0181 5337150	Freeline Peace Camp Shandon, Helensburgh Dumbartonshire Scotland G81 8HT 01419 823 501	Autonomous Green Action, P.O. 4712 Stirling Scotland G61 8BB
Bath ERI c/o PO Box 426, Bath Somerset BA1 2DD	Defend Community Action Box E, 111 Magdalen Street, Bath BA1 5FE	EEF Winter Meet c/o 16 Albert Road Littlehampton West Sussex BN14 8EM 01903 721615 armer@radiofreesussex.co.uk	Arachnid Black Corpus (Informer support) c/o PO Box 446 Sheffield S1 1BY	Mining Watch PO Box 1377, Shaftesbury Dorset DT1 1JZ 01722 764279 poct@radioeef.org	Friends of Lyngby Forest c/o 3 Abbot Road Folkstone, Kent CT20 01622 370067 / 01622 748458 / 01622 748485	Action For Social Ecology Box 34588 19026 Stockholm, Sweden actforsocec@usa.net
Bristol ERI c/o Box 81 Greenleaf Bookshop 63 Colston Street Bristol BS1 5BB 0117 838 3083	Defend the Streets PO Box 9888, London N4 4UY 0171 281 4621 trh@radioeef.org	EEF Winter Meet c/o 16 Albert Road Littlehampton West Sussex BN14 8EM 01903 721615 armer@radiofreesussex.co.uk	Arachnid Black Corpus (Informer support) c/o PO Box 446 Sheffield S1 1BY	London Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Autonomous Green Action, P.O. 4712 Stirling Scotland G61 8BB
Cambridge ERI c/o 8, 12 Mill Road Cambridge CB1 2AD	Defend the Valleys c/o Greenpeace Environment Centre Pier Street Swansea SA1 1RY	EEF Winter Meet c/o 16 Albert Road Littlehampton West Sussex BN14 8EM 01903 721615 armer@radiofreesussex.co.uk	Arachnid Black Corpus (Informer support) c/o PO Box 446 Sheffield S1 1BY	London Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Autonomous Green Action, P.O. 4712 Stirling Scotland G61 8BB
Cheltenham ERI 18 Portland Street Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL2 2PB as@cheltenhamgreen.org	Defend the Valleys c/o Greenpeace Environment Centre Pier Street Swansea SA1 1RY	EEF Winter Meet c/o 16 Albert Road Littlehampton West Sussex BN14 8EM 01903 721615 armer@radiofreesussex.co.uk	Arachnid Black Corpus (Informer support) c/o PO Box 446 Sheffield S1 1BY	London Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Autonomous Green Action, P.O. 4712 Stirling Scotland G61 8BB
Devon Energy Network PO Box 185 Exeter EX4 4BW	Defend the Valleys c/o Greenpeace Environment Centre Pier Street Swansea SA1 1RY	EEF Winter Meet c/o 16 Albert Road Littlehampton West Sussex BN14 8EM 01903 721615 armer@radiofreesussex.co.uk	Arachnid Black Corpus (Informer support) c/o PO Box 446 Sheffield S1 1BY	London Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Autonomous Green Action, P.O. 4712 Stirling Scotland G61 8BB
EEF ERI c/o 61 South Street E1 4AD, London E1 7XH 9Q 0171 474 4711	Defend the Valleys c/o Greenpeace Environment Centre Pier Street Swansea SA1 1RY	EEF Winter Meet c/o 16 Albert Road Littlehampton West Sussex BN14 8EM 01903 721615 armer@radiofreesussex.co.uk	Arachnid Black Corpus (Informer support) c/o PO Box 446 Sheffield S1 1BY	London Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Autonomous Green Action, P.O. 4712 Stirling Scotland G61 8BB
Glasgow ERI PO Box 180 Glasgow G4 8AB	Defend the Valleys c/o Greenpeace Environment Centre Pier Street Swansea SA1 1RY	EEF Winter Meet c/o 16 Albert Road Littlehampton West Sussex BN14 8EM 01903 721615 armer@radiofreesussex.co.uk	Arachnid Black Corpus (Informer support) c/o PO Box 446 Sheffield S1 1BY	London Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Autonomous Green Action, P.O. 4712 Stirling Scotland G61 8BB
Guilford ERI PO Box 217 Guilford GU1 2WB 01483 202312	Defend the Valleys c/o Greenpeace Environment Centre Pier Street Swansea SA1 1RY	EEF Winter Meet c/o 16 Albert Road Littlehampton West Sussex BN14 8EM 01903 721615 armer@radiofreesussex.co.uk	Arachnid Black Corpus (Informer support) c/o PO Box 446 Sheffield S1 1BY	London Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Autonomous Green Action, P.O. 4712 Stirling Scotland G61 8BB
Gwynedd & Mon ERI The Greenhouse 1 Trevelyan Terrace Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 01244 366821 stf@bangor.ac.uk	Defend the Valleys c/o Greenpeace Environment Centre Pier Street Swansea SA1 1RY	EEF Winter Meet c/o 16 Albert Road Littlehampton West Sussex BN14 8EM 01903 721615 armer@radiofreesussex.co.uk	Arachnid Black Corpus (Informer support) c/o PO Box 446 Sheffield S1 1BY	London Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Autonomous Green Action, P.O. 4712 Stirling Scotland G61 8BB
Hull ERI c/o PO Box 43 Hull HU7 1AA	Defend the Valleys c/o Greenpeace Environment Centre Pier Street Swansea SA1 1RY	EEF Winter Meet c/o 16 Albert Road Littlehampton West Sussex BN14 8EM 01903 721615 armer@radiofreesussex.co.uk	Arachnid Black Corpus (Informer support) c/o PO Box 446 Sheffield S1 1BY	London Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Autonomous Green Action, P.O. 4712 Stirling Scotland G61 8BB
LEAF Box 2, 15 Ryelands St, Leicester LE2 1HH 0116 216 8693	Defend the Valleys c/o Greenpeace Environment Centre Pier Street Swansea SA1 1RY	EEF Winter Meet c/o 16 Albert Road Littlehampton West Sussex BN14 8EM 01903 721615 armer@radiofreesussex.co.uk	Arachnid Black Corpus (Informer support) c/o PO Box 446 Sheffield S1 1BY	London Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Autonomous Green Action, P.O. 4712 Stirling Scotland G61 8BB
Leeds ERI, c/o CRD, 16 Grosvenor Avenue Leeds LS7 2PA 0113 242 4366 cd@crd.org	Defend the Valleys c/o Greenpeace Environment Centre Pier Street Swansea SA1 1RY	EEF Winter Meet c/o 16 Albert Road Littlehampton West Sussex BN14 8EM 01903 721615 armer@radiofreesussex.co.uk	Arachnid Black Corpus (Informer support) c/o PO Box 446 Sheffield S1 1BY	London Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Autonomous Green Action, P.O. 4712 Stirling Scotland G61 8BB
Liverpool ERI 99 Bold Street Liverpool L1 4RY	Defend the Valleys c/o Greenpeace Environment Centre Pier Street Swansea SA1 1RY	EEF Winter Meet c/o 16 Albert Road Littlehampton West Sussex BN14 8EM 01903 721615 armer@radiofreesussex.co.uk	Arachnid Black Corpus (Informer support) c/o PO Box 446 Sheffield S1 1BY	London Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Autonomous Green Action, P.O. 4712 Stirling Scotland G61 8BB
London ERI (Londoner) 01524 563768 london@londoner.com	Defend the Valleys c/o Greenpeace Environment Centre Pier Street Swansea SA1 1RY	EEF Winter Meet c/o 16 Albert Road Littlehampton West Sussex BN14 8EM 01903 721615 armer@radiofreesussex.co.uk	Arachnid Black Corpus (Informer support) c/o PO Box 446 Sheffield S1 1BY	London Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Autonomous Green Action, P.O. 4712 Stirling Scotland G61 8BB
Manchester ERI Dept 28 281 Winslow Road Manchester M14 8LW 0161 226 9814 mcn@radioeef.org	Defend the Valleys c/o Greenpeace Environment Centre Pier Street Swansea SA1 1RY	EEF Winter Meet c/o 16 Albert Road Littlehampton West Sussex BN14 8EM 01903 721615 armer@radiofreesussex.co.uk	Arachnid Black Corpus (Informer support) c/o PO Box 446 Sheffield S1 1BY	London Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Autonomous Green Action, P.O. 4712 Stirling Scotland G61 8BB
Nottingham ERI The Greenhouse 42-46 Bedford Street Nottingham NG2 1SR directline@nottingham-ri.co.uk	Defend the Valleys c/o Greenpeace Environment Centre Pier Street Swansea SA1 1RY	EEF Winter Meet c/o 16 Albert Road Littlehampton West Sussex BN14 8EM 01903 721615 armer@radiofreesussex.co.uk	Arachnid Black Corpus (Informer support) c/o PO Box 446 Sheffield S1 1BY	London Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Autonomous Green Action, P.O. 4712 Stirling Scotland G61 8BB
Project (jou)reach & small group support c/o Mervi Sari meri@nematoole.org	Defend the Valleys c/o Greenpeace Environment Centre Pier Street Swansea SA1 1RY	EEF Winter Meet c/o 16 Albert Road Littlehampton West Sussex BN14 8EM 01903 721615 armer@radiofreesussex.co.uk	Arachnid Black Corpus (Informer support) c/o PO Box 446 Sheffield S1 1BY	London Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Greenpeace Miller Support Campaign c/o 44a Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX	Autonomous Green Action, P.O. 4712 Stirling Scotland G61 8BB

Active Groups are local ERI contacts. Some of them are active groups, some of them are exploring towards that but need more people to get in touch. Some are just people who will know what is going on direct action wise in their area. The Propaganda section lists non-ERI publications which we think are worth reading. Taxwatch is a monthly newsletter which tracks changes in UK tax laws. The following pages list some of the main groups and organisations involved in the UK environmental movement.

SHELL ON EARTH

BACKGROUND

The oil-rich Niger Delta has been profitably exploited by oil companies such as Shell for many years. Their multi-bilking US dollar investment projects mean environmental pollution and landscape degradation to the people who live in the area. From 1958 to date, Shell has drilled about 1,000 million barrels of oil from Ogoniland with total disregard for the people living in close proximity to their operations. The environment is totally devastated and the atmosphere is polluted with carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons; the streams and creeks have been poisoned with acid rain and oil spills, and the rivers are without fish. While Shell Oil reaps massive profits and sponsors the accommodating Nigerian government, many areas in the Niger Delta have been left in abject poverty with no electricity, pipe-borne water, equipped schools and hospitals, no housing schemes, no roads, no employment opportunities and no control over how their land is governed.

On November 10, 1995, the Nigerian Military government, in spite of a world-wide appeal, "judicially" murdered by hanging writer and human rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and 8 other Ogoni environmental activists for campaigning against injustice. Four years on after these murders and nothing has changed. The Nigerian Government has still not met one demand made in the Ogoni Bill of Rights.

Peaceful occupations of oil installations run by Shell and Chevron have increased since the mobilisation of the Ogoni and other ethnic groups, and the hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa in 1995. Increasing numbers of groups across the Niger Delta have been calling for economic and environmental justice and joining the pan-Niger Delta resistance movement.

Anniversary Actions Several anti-Shell actions, taken to commemorate the executions of the Ogoni Nine, happened around Britain on November 10th along with a number of talks and video showings and the protests outside Shell and the Nigerian High Commission by MOSOP (Movement for the Survival of Ogoni peoples).

In Stockport, activists from Manchester Earth First! hung banners from the canopy of a Shell petrol station while others blockaded the entrance. The police even advised them on how to blockade more effectively until their senior officers arrived. Many people were persuaded to buy fuel at alternative outlets after brief discussions. Leaflets were also handed out, and pumps temporarily shut down. Inevitably the Bill turned up and several police cars and a van ominously parked in the forecast helped to discourage trade. Eventually the EF'ers were given the ultimatum of move or face arrest for breach of the peace. They refused to move on and one arrest shortly followed. A de-arrest was quickly negotiated - "release him or you will have to arrest us all" - and the ten Mankurats left soon after.

In Sunderland over 40 people blockaded the Grindon Mill Shell garage, shutting down the pumps and talking to motorists about the company's pollution and links to human rights abuses.

Twenty people all but shut down a Shell station in Norwich as they had done on November 10th for the last three years, with only 10 cars using it all morning.

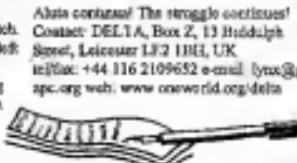
Several different Shell stations in Leicester were hit by a roving team of three energised protesters switching off the main fuel cut-off switch, locking pumps, running about the issues and running around with a banner saying 'Get the Shell out of Nigeria'. They also re-named Gallowtree Gate as 'Ken Saro-Wiwa Street' for the day.

In London a roving team of two shut down a Shell station, two Texaco's and an Esso with great ease using the same manoeuvre. These rather effective 10-second actions left forecourt staff completely confused and blocking the entrances themselves, calling head office for advice and the police for a shoulder to cry on.



On 20 November, over 1300 Nigerian soldiers moved into Bayelsa state and began killing, raping and burning down villages. The attacks were launched with no government announcement as a State of Emergency would not look good for the new civilian government. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch fear mass killings of innocent civilians. The attacks represent advance action to hit the communities where resistance against the oil companies and government has been particularly strong.

In an emergency response, on 24th November 4 people chained themselves together, blocking Northumberland Avenue outside the Nigerian High Commission. 2 chained themselves across the entrance while others held banners (eg 'Civilian government? STOP THE KILLING'). Nigerian resistance leaders, London-based Nigerian and British activists gathered to shout 'Stop the killing, stop the drilling'. The 4 blocking the road had their chains cut and were arrested and held for 6 hours, charged with obstruction and in court on Tuesday 30th November. The action was reported in a major national newspaper in Nigeria that night.



Letters of protest can be sent to

His Excellency President Olusegun Obasanjo, State House, Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria. Fax: +234 9 523 2136
Mark Moody-Stuart, Chairman of the Board of Directors, President and Managing Director, Royal Dutch/Shell Petroleum Company, Castel Van Hylckama 30, 2596 HR, The Hague, The Netherlands. Fax: +31 70 377 2646

POLL TAX PRIVATEISED

Since April, local authorities have no longer had the right to use the courts to collect unpaid Poll Tax. They are therefore passing it on to private debt collectors such as East of England Trade Protection Society, a division of Foreign Credit Services Ltd, 8th Floor, 58 Dorset Road, Norwich, NR1 0YR. 01603 629105. Tell them your views

100,000 NEW TERRORISTS

The queen's speech announced that the government wants to introduce a new, revamped Prevention of Terrorism Act, redefining terrorism as "the use of violence against persons or property, or the threat to, use such violence to intimidate or coerce the government, the public or any section of the public for political, religious or ideological ends." If Gaddafi was alive and living in this country

he'd be in jail, along with the founders of the Labour Party

ALSO BEWARE :

The queen's speech also proposed giving the security services sweeping powers to intercept Internet communication and read private e-mail. Police will likely share information obtained in this country with other police forces worldwide.

Contact: soa-campaign@gsa.spc.org

WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT

Over the last few years, many academics have written about environmental direct action and Earth First! In this feature we aim to show the people who have been writing about just what exactly has been said about them. There isn't the space here to include more than short summaries and some quotes, but we've included enough information for anyone interested to get the full piece from their local library. For some full-on theory from an activist perspective, of course, you can't get better than Do or Die, Anarchy and the like, listed in the contacts page. Academics tend to be more positive and less critical.

DIY CULTURE AND DIRECT ACTION

E.F. Ridley 'Crusaders and Politicians', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol.51, No.3, July 1998. A special issue of 'Parliamentary Affairs' looks at why protest and politics outside parliament have grown while establishment party politics has declined. Ridley identifies the strength of protest, or 'crusade groups' like ours, to lie in their moral appearance (not after personal gain), their displays of courage (e.g. tree-sitters and tuners) and their avoidance of institutional politics, which is viewed as corrupt and self-serving by the public.

"Crusade groups are... outsiders that do not fit into the established system of interest organisations / pressure groups which, with government, constitute the networks of policy-making. They are excluded because they have no ongoing concern with a set of material interests, no clientele that can be defined in such terms, and often no permanent organisation either. But they may also be outsiders by choice. This can be a tactical choice, as suggested above (e.g. to mobilise support that crosses socio-economic divisions as well as party-political lines). It can also be a tactical choice to avoid being turned with the brush of politics, since a political colouring is more likely to lose than win supporters."

"their supporters may show unexpectedly strong emotions, duplicitous expected behaviour patterns and disrupting established ways of government - as did the Crusades many centuries ago."¹¹

Darren Head, 'Direct Action and the Environmental Movement', *Talking Politics*, 10, Spring 1998. Discusses the nature of direct action, and argues that it is the reaction of social groups who find themselves marginalized by the political system.

"Activists themselves really fall into two camps, those who want to overturn the system and replace it with decentralised, democratic and sustainable alternatives (see Earth First! And Green Anarchist networks) and those who want to see the processes of liberal democracy refined, made more accountable, less secretive and obviously sustainable. In both cases direct action is seen as

the means to their differing ends."¹²

"Much of the thinking which underpins environmental movements' demands sees the institutions of the State as anomalies. The state's systems and processes are remote from the individual. They are actually responsible for unregulated growth and pollution and they are unable to acknowledge difference and alternative lifestyles."

"An explanation for... direct action is perhaps best rooted in the sense of isolation, disenfranchisement and the failure of the liberal democratic system to encompass variety and difference."¹³

THE ANTI-ROADS MOVEMENT

Brian Doherty 'Opposition to Road-Building', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol.51, No 3, July 1998, Oxford University Press. Doherty covers the Earth First! critique of Greenpeace/Friends of the Earth and looks at how the anti-roads movement unites reformist NIMBYists and countercultural ideals. He states that "The anti-roads movement is an awkward combination of a radical new social movement and a more specific reformist environmentalism".

"The direct action groups helped to create a story, while the more moderate groups were able to fill the new political scenario with political meanings, arguing the case against roads on technical grounds. In turn, this also allowed for some surprisingly positive media coverage of the counter-cultural idealism of the direct action groups."¹⁴

Brian Doherty - b.j.doherty@kent.ac.uk Looking at how "importance of action" develops, Doherty argues that the example of the anti-roads protest "support the view that when new forms [of NIMBY] emerge they do so as a result of interaction between movements and their opponents". He defines the use of tunnels, lock-ons, tripods etc. as a "manufactured vulnerability".

"Whereas previously barricades provided protection for protesters now the tripod exposes the vulnerability of the protester. It does not oppose force with force, but places

the responsibility for the protester's safety to the hands of the authorities."¹⁵

"If the authorities are not going to use violence on a scale sufficient to shock the public, how can protesters resist in such a way that maximises their effectiveness but also exposes the contrast between the force used by the authorities and protesters' moral superiority? Eco-activists in Britain and elsewhere have used technical devices to manufacture their own dangers in order to make their bodies vulnerable. The use of tools is therefore more than simply a technical game; it is essential to the dual aims of making power visible by prolonging its exposure and attempting to change government policy directly."¹⁶

Brian Doherty, 'Paving the Way: The Rise of Direct Action against Road-building and the Changing Character of British Environmentalism', *Political Studies* (1999), XLVII. Here Doherty looks at how the radical environmental movement refutes the theory of 'political opportunity structure', which claims that "social movements form when ordinary citizens, sometimes encouraged by leaders, respond to change in opportunity that lower the costs of collective action, reveal potential allies and show where elites and authorities are vulnerable." He points out that the protesters at Twyford, for example, had little hope of success, and that "sites for protests were chosen based on the need to oppose the imminent destruction of valued locations rather than based upon an instrumental calculation over the longer term of the right moment to act". While the theory maintains in that the passion and determination of the activists themselves can create a movement, "credit must be given to the inspiration provided by the movements' early users who established the Earth First! network and protested at Twyford Down with little hope of success".

Wallace McNeish, 'The Anti-Roads Protest in the UK: A Sociological and Political Analysis', in *Alternative Futures and Popular Protest Conference Board Papers 1996* Available through inter-library loans from the National Library.

McNeish looks at the anti-roads movement according to the theories of Jürgen Habermas, who sees new social movements as forms of resistance to the 'System's' colonisation of the 'Life-world'. The lack of public consultation over new road developments, for example, and the way in which the issue was dealt with by government as a technical one to be decided by experts, represent the encroachment of the 'System' on the life-

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world." The key to success for social movements lies in how well they express a "communicative rationality" to oppose this enforcement.

"For libertarians the new social movements... provide exemplars and prototype models for the possible birth of a new society that is predicated on equality, universal rights and radical democracy. The anti-roads movement fulfills such of these positive criteria in its basic community life protest camps and free states, in its law-breaking NVA, in its grassroots participatory orientation and in its refusal to abide by the state's repressive laws or placating decisions."

Ben Soell, "Strategies of Resistance at the Pollak Free State Road Protest Camp" *Environmental Politics*, Vol 6, No 4, Winter 1997

Published by Frank Cass, London

Soell uses the theories of the Marxist Antonio Gramsci to consider how for the 'core group' of protesters at Pollak represented a challenge to the 'hegemony', or dominant, capitalist system.

"The ideological perspectives and strategies of the core group are best described as embryonic counter-hegemonic resistance, while at the same time their actions also contribute to a residue of reform."

He states that "the core group challenged hegemonic ideology and culture in four main ways. They challenged the legitimacy of ownership of land, the democratic nature of Britain's liberal-democratic polity, the notion of economic growth and 'infrastructure improvement' as being equal to developmental or progress, and commodity consumption as the route to personal satisfaction or happiness." However, they were only 'embryonic' because "long term strategic theory was not a central articulating principle amongst the core group."

EARTH FIRST! (UK)

Each of this article covers, to a greater or lesser extent, the EF! critique of Greenpeace and other Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations, the debates on non-violence and property destruction, the law, the media and personal lifestyle. They tend to position the philosophy of EF! UK in between deep ecology and social ecology, distancing it from its US counterpart, and then examine how the political strategy relates to core principles. But remember, no-one speaks for you - even the Action Update can't really be representative.

Ben Soell, "If Not You, Then Who? Earth First! in the UK," *Environmental Politics*, Vol 6, No 4, Winter 1997, published by Frank Cass, London

In this short article Soell views Earth First! UK as part of the same "embryonic counter-hegemony" as the Pollak Free Staters, being "perhaps the only part of the wider green movement today which asks questions of systemic rather than just reform-oriented scope."

"Ecologically EF! is concerned with trying to influence the future trajectory of 'progress' and 'development' through a mixture of green cultural alternatives and NVA protest exposures and show-downs which try to show where power lies, whose interests it is being used in, and what is passing for 'progress' or 'development'."

Derrik Wall, Mobilising Earth First! in Britain, *Environmental Politics*, Vol 8, Spring 1999, No 1. Published by Frank Cass. (also the book "Earth First! and the Anti-Roads Movement", 1999, Routledge, London)

Derrik Wall examines which structural influences enabled EF! to form at the time it did, although he recognises that "whatever the structural conditions, without the initial efforts of small numbers of innovators who 'produce and propagate ideologies' and mobilise other resources, movements are unlikely to emerge."

"While greens may not merely seek redress of particular grievances but to create more fundamental transformation, without such concrete grievances or 'mobilisation targets' a green political critique may appear too diffuse and abstract to allow movement mobilisation. Such 'targets' act as symbols or points at which particular concerns collect together to reach a threshold where protest may occur."

"Interview accounts suggest that the initial 'cost' of participation in direct action was perceived to be low, while the 'benefits' in terms of direct disruption, media attention, self-empowerment and solidarity creation were correspondingly high. The lack of facilitation [government responsiveness] and the absence of severe repression meant that EF! (UK) found it easier to raise fundamentalist demands."

Jonathas Purkis, During to dream abolition in the philosophy, organization and campaigning strategies of Earth First! in "To Make Another World: Studies in Protest and Collective Action", Barker & Kennedy, 1996

This article begins by describing an 'ethical shift' of hegemony, then uses that to explain abolition in EF! in three ways: philosophy, organization and campaigning strategy. Purkis argues that EF! are novel in taking the 'problems' into the offices, shops and places which are usually separated from politics and struggle.

"whilst EF! as a group may concentrate on

the most obviously 'criminal' companies, in their literature they may well also identify other 'suspicious' organisations and in their everyday lives activists usually monitor their own consumption patterns using ecological and other criteria. Consequently we can see a politicisation of everyday life and the emergence of a ecological notion of the 'personal as political' - when this new sensibility is linked to direct action, it is possible to see a dual type of resistance - both symbolic and economic - to the prevailing economic and political culture, on a local and a global basis."

"although EF! are being idealistic in their long term vision of a society adhering to some of the principles of Social Ecology, in their day to day activism they show a pragmatism and a reflexivity of purpose as to what is feasible."

Alex Flows, Earth First! Defending Mother Earth, direct-style in George McKay's 'DIY Culture', 1999

Speaking as an activist, Flows analyses the different ethical and political ideas of EF! in a much more thorough, if also more personal way, bearing in mind that "EF! is defined by the people who make it up at any one given time" and "ideology is autonomous, autonomy is the ideology." She argues that EF! is the opposite of a single issue campaign. "EF! aims to bring to the public's attention the 'hidden' socio-economic/environmental costs, the knock-on effects 'progress' can only be defined as such because it is *only* presented and evaluated in a 'single-issue' way."

"On its Action Update, EF! defines itself as 'a convenient banner for people who share similar philosophies to work under'. This 'similar philosophy' is an appreciation of a shared ethical/political agenda with a fundamental target: while groups tackle, for example, intensive farming, the arms trade, read-building, these are the effects of a more insidious cause - 'progress culture'. Capitalism, modernity, call it what you will - EF! challenges this dominant paradigm, the structure/values/virtues spiral which promotes and perpetuates exploitative unsustainability, and terms it 'progress', 'development'."

"EF! links Western 'progress' to an anthropocentric (human centred) value system. That is, society perceives itself as being separate to, and better than, nature, rather than an intrinsic part of it. EF! not only challenges this anthropocentric value-system with direct action, but posits an alternative, holistic ethic as a replacement."



CAMPFIELD 6TH ANNIVERSARY

Three hundred people, from Kent, Bristol, Bradford, Leeds, Coventry, Birmingham, Brighton and London, marked the sixth anniversary of the opening of Campfield Immigration Detention Centre. They were harassed by the police all day, with every protester photographed and videoed by the police.

Campfield is surrounded by a 20 foot high, half inch thick metal wall. Protesters were banging on this with their hands to let the refugees in the camp know they were there. Police decided this was causing "extensive damage" to the fence and ordered the protesters to leave. This only encouraged people to bang even harder. Next police charged the demonstrators and began pulling people away from the fence dragging them through a hedgerow and physically throwing them into the field adjacent to the camp. A line of police was then put on the fence to keep protesters away.

Demonstrators let off multicoloured Iranian balloons that tangled above the 20 foot high fence, their strings caught on the razor wire. Paper planes flew over carrying messages of support in many different languages to the detainees. Protesters played drums, sistars, guitars and makeshift drums with pots and pans.

Group 4, who run Campfield for the Immigration Service, were clearly nervous of the protest. Bolts along the fence had been welded solid. Detainees were locked indoors until the demonstration finished.

At the end of the demo protesters agreed to continue opposition against existing detention centres Campfield (Oxfordshire), Hurnwood (Brentwood), Tinsley (Gerrard), Haslar (Portsmouth), Rochester Prison (Kent) and against the new detention centres planned at Oakham (Cambridgeshire), and Aldington (Kent).

Contact: National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns (NCAADC), 10 Harrison Road, Birmingham B10 2Q8. 0121 544-5947, ncadc@caadc.demon.co.uk
Also: CAGE c/o NCA ADC

FREE MUMIA DEMO's

Demo's took place across the world when black activist Mumia Abu Jamal's death warrant was signed. He is now expected to appear in court for his appeal in March after both sides have presented their cases in writing. After that it is a question of whether the judge decides to hear the new evidence that was not available, or not presented, in the original trial, or simply to rule on the basis of the existing transcript. The death warrant hangs over the proceedings and Mumia's life is still in grave danger.

Bristol

The Bristol Free Mumia group organised a public meeting, daily leafleting and a demo, plus a benefit gig on Friday 19th Nov. The leafleting happened outside the Disney shop, because the American companies are accomplices in this injustice. Some activists also discouraged potential Disney customers to buy from them. At the 6th November demo, about 50 people turned up. They carried placards with the text "Mumia must live!" and banners. Shouts demanding Justice and freedom for Mumia happened along the march. The most attractive thing of the demo was the performance of three activists as "Mumia Justice" and the "men in Black". This was a parody of Justice being under the control of some real dodgy greasers. It grabbed the attention of the Saturday shoppers and the activists ended up performing the minister charging of Justice for more than an hour (as a result the Mumia Justice has lost her voice...), making the coppers lose their temper with so much running up and down. Bristol has also hosted an exhibition "Art for Mumia", while Interference FM broadcasted Mumia's spoken word together with relevant music.

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actionsupdate@gn.apc.org
www.cco-action.org/efau
Subscribe to email edition for free.

Edinburgh

25-30 people held a successful picket of US-owned businesses McDonalds and American Express in support of Mumia on Sat 6th November in Princes St. The American Express window was decorated with posters. Small groups entered McDonalds and American Express and leafleted workers and consumers inside. The police came and took everyone's names, but there were no arrests.

Liverpool

On Thursday 25th November there was a Street Protest in Liverpool sponsored by the Local Trades Council, UNISON branch, Green Party, Catholic Worker and various socialist groups.

London

Over 150 people gathered at Trafalgar Square on Saturday 6 November and moved on to hold a rally in Hanover Square, home to US magazine Vanity Fair and TV company ABC, both of which have contributed to the vicious campaign to kill Mumia. Mumia Must Live! 801 Haven, London WC1N 3XX www.cailstok.com/home/mumia

UWA COMMUNIQUE

"Approximately 200 members of the Uwa indigenous tribe of northeastern Colombia assembled in a permanent settlement on part of our ancestral land [on] November 16. This area... is the site where the multinational company Occidental Petroleum (Oxy) wants to drill the oil well 'Gibraltar 1,' which threatens life and our ancient culture. With this permanent protest and with the support of the local farmers... we are claiming our ancestral and constitutional rights to life and to our traditional territory. We Uwa people are willing to give our lives to defend Mother Earth from this project which will annihilate our culture, destroy nature, and upset the world's equilibrium... we ask people around the world who value the Earth and indigenous peoples to speak out against the multinational oil company Oxy through protest, letters and other actions of solidarity." www.uwa.org

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